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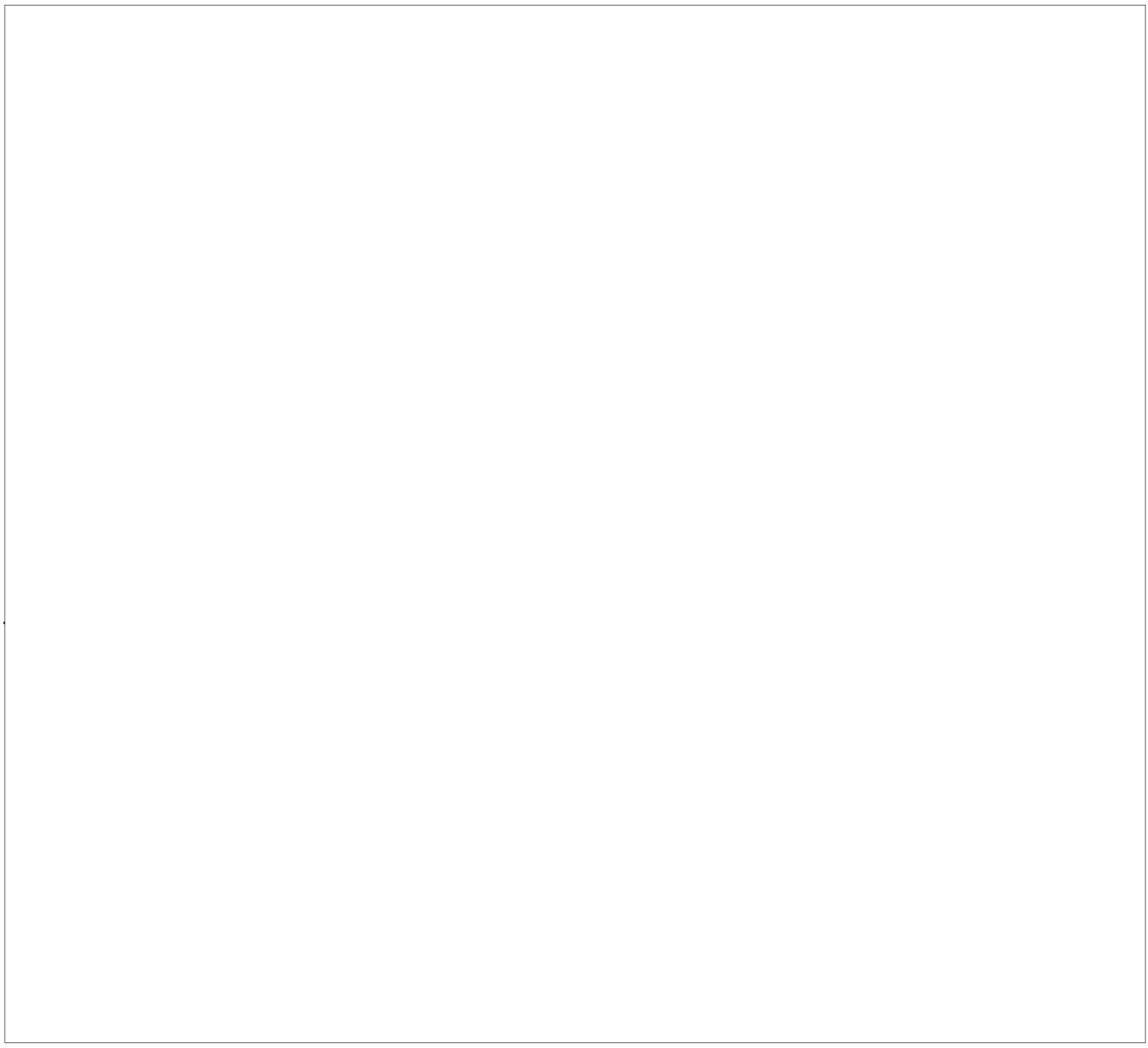
38

WORLDWIDE DEVELOPMENTS RELATED TO THE

NR US STAND ON HUMAN RIGHTS

AUGUST 1977



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LATIN AMERICA

Several high-level US officials visited Latin America during August. State Department Human Rights Coordinator Derian, UN Ambassador Young, and Assistant Secretary of State Todman discussed the US stand on human rights with Latin leaders, and there were significant developments in several countries.

Uruguay became the fourth South American military regime to announce its intention of holding elections early in the 1980s. Peru, Bolivia, and Chile had already disclosed similar plans.

Chilean President Pinochet announced the abolition of the National Intelligence Directorate (DINA) on August 12, during Assistant Secretary Todman's visit. Considerable uncertainty remained, however, over the extent to which the newly created National Information Center would refrain from the kind of conduct that made DINA notorious for human rights abuses. The bulk of DINA's arrest and detention functions have devolved upon the Carabineros and the Investigaciones, which are highly regarded professional law enforcement units, but extra-legal activities could still occur under the new structure. Nevertheless, the security service reorganization did seem to be a genuine attempt to improve Chile's human rights performance. Spanish Socialist Party Leader Felipe Gonzalez, meanwhile, visited Chile in late August and said that the situation there was "not as black and white" as pictured abroad. Gonzalez was cordially received by government leaders and he was allowed to speak freely with whomever he chose, including the two prominent prisoners for whom he sought pardons.

The Duvalier government in Haiti took some steps to improve its human rights performance. Haiti was also one of several Latin countries that appeared during August to be moving toward ratification of the American Convention on Human Rights. The recent revival of interest in the convention, which was adopted at San Jose, Costa Rica in 1969, is clearly related to the US stand on human rights and to President Carter's

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signing of the convention for the US on June 1. The Convention still lacks the eleven ratifications needed for its entry into force, however, and it remains a somewhat controversial issue in a number of countries, including some with relatively good human rights records.

A storm appeared to be brewing in Brazil over widely publicized charges that some of the students arrested for subversive activities in Rio de Janeiro in July were tortured while in custody of the First Army's anti-subversive unit. The Brazilian Bar Association called for an investigation.

Argentina cancelled its participation in the annual UNITAS joint Naval exercise with the US. The move probably was meant to signal Argentine displeasure over human rights-connected cutbacks in US military aid. The abduction of the Argentine ambassador to Venezuela remained unsolved, meanwhile, as did the disappearances earlier of a prominent labor leader and a number of lawyers. With the winding down of the antiterrorism campaign in Argentina it is becoming apparent that some of the continuing political violence in that country is the result of inter- and intra- service rivalries and of actions by ultra-conservative elements that the government cannot control.

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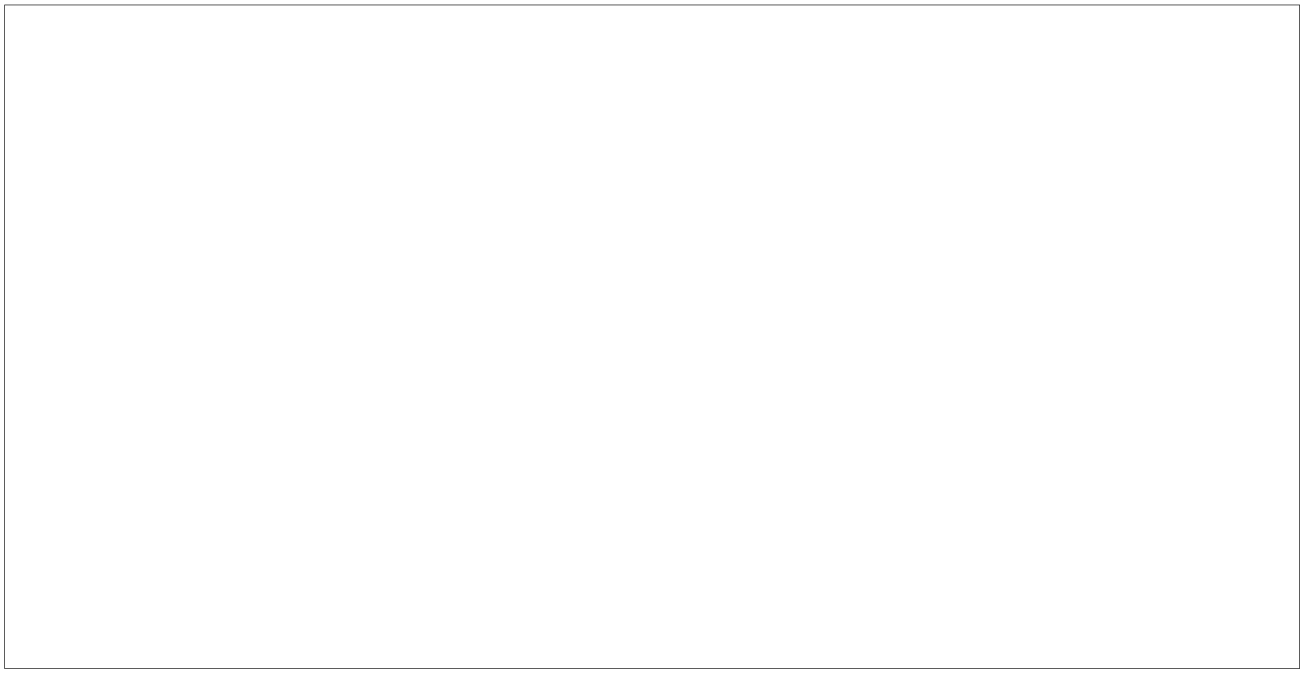

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